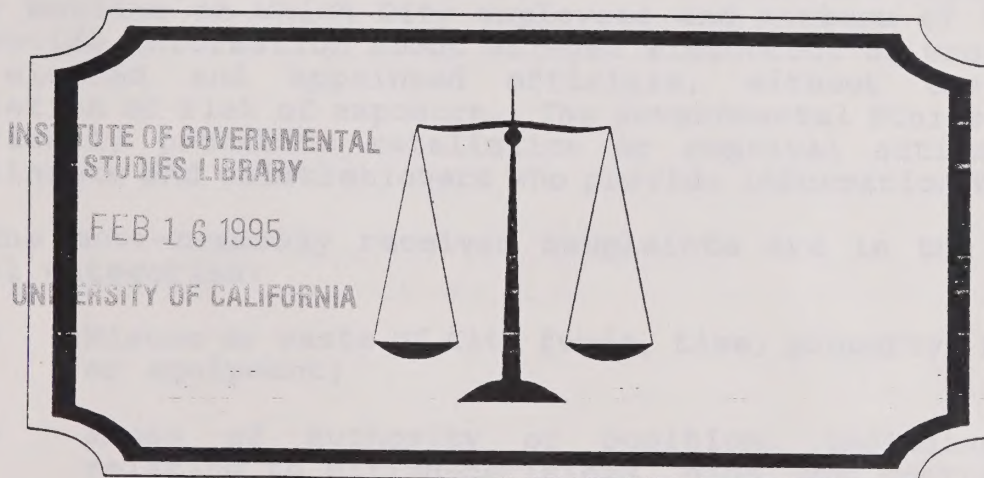


# Los Angeles City Ethics Commission



Complaint/Whistleblower Program





## COMPLAINT/WHISTLEBLOWER PROGRAM

Los Angeles City Charter Section 600 requires the City Ethics Commission (CEC) to maintain a whistleblower hotline for the reporting of alleged misconduct and wrongdoing, by City officials and/or misuse of City funds. The hotline is one component of the Complaint/Whistleblower Program.

Complaints may be submitted anonymously (informal complaints), or signed and sworn under penalty of perjury (formal complaints). In either case, the Enforcement staff processes all available information, makes appropriate determinations, and takes necessary action to resolve the matter, including making referrals to other City departments and providing information and responses to the complainants.

The complaints are submitted to the Enforcement Division through various sources, including by telephone, by mail, and in-person. As part of this Program, the CEC maintains a 24-hour 800-number hotline on which City employees and members of the public may provide information about alleged misconduct or wrongdoing by City elected and appointed officials, without the fear of retaliation or risk of exposure. The Governmental Ethics Ordinance specifically prohibits retaliation or reprisal actions against complainants and whistleblowers who provide information to the CEC.

The most-commonly received complaints are in the following general categories:

- Misuse or waste of City funds, time, property, resources, or equipment;
- Abuse of authority or position, including matters relating to hiring-decisions, bids, and contracts;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Alleged violations of law pertaining to gifts, travel, honoraria, and outside earned income;
- "Revolving door" issues, relating to lobbying activities of former City officials and future employment of City officials; and
- Alleged violations of campaign finance laws, as well as complaints alleging violations of governmental ethics laws regarding candidates who are officeholders.

The complaint program includes an animated video message that airs continuously on the City's automated video bulletin board.

Attached is a transcript of the message recorded on the Complaint Hotline answering machine, a summary of significant 1993 Hotline cases and a copy of the Program's flyer.





### Significant 1993 Cases

As a result of the City Ethics Commission Complaint/Whistleblower Program, which includes referrals and follow-ups, numerous City departments took corrective actions in 1993.

Examples of actions initiated as a result of complaints referred by the City Ethics Commission to various departments are as follows:

- City employees used fictitious social security numbers to receive additional pay-checks. The matter was referred to the LAPD for investigation. Following the LAPD investigation, the matter was referred to the City Attorney's office and a hearing was held. Misdemeanor charges will be filed against the employees, and restitution demanded.
- A City employee was using City resources and supplies for his personal business. The appropriate department investigated and found evidence to support the allegation. The employee admitted the misconduct. The department has recommended that the employee receive a 5-day suspension.
- A City employee often left work early and was unable to be reached. An investigation was conducted by the department, and it was determined that the employee was often not at work when he should have been. The department recommended that the employee receive a 30-day suspension without pay.
- A City supervisor was frequently armed with a gun and was stealing City supplies. The department investigated the allegations and found them to be substantiated. The employee was directed not to carry the firearm during City hours, instructed to reimburse the City for the stolen supplies, and received a notice to correct deficiencies.
- A City employee had stolen City property in his garage. The incident was investigated by the department and the stolen property was recovered. The department imposed a 20-day suspension.
- A City vehicle was parked at a golf course during working hours. The department investigated the complaint and found the employee to be playing golf during working hours. The department issued a written notice to correct deficiencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A report of the City Health Commission (attached) dated 1/15/54, which contains recommendations for the improvement of the City's health department is being submitted for your information.

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8. The report of the City Health Commission dated 1/15/54, which contains recommendations for the improvement of the City's health department is being submitted for your information.



- A City vehicle was frequently parked in a shopping center for extended periods of time. The allegation was investigated by the department and found to be substantiated. The employee was disciplined with a 20-day suspension.
- A City employee sold various items for personal gain on City property and during work hours. The case was referred to and investigated by the appropriate department. The employee was identified and verbally reprimanded for his actions.
- A City employee provided gardening services to a citizen on City time using City equipment. The department imposed discipline and terminated the employee.
- A City employee was selling various personal items and using the City telephone for calls regarding these items. The department conducted an investigation and found evidence to substantiate the allegation. The employee was counseled regarding the inappropriate behavior.
- A City employee was using City equipment without authorization, attending private meetings on City time, and had stolen property in her car. The allegation was investigated by both the department and the LAPD. No specific evidence was found to substantiate the allegations. However, the department discovered conflicts involving the employee and other personnel, as well as departmental procedural irregularities. The employee was counseled regarding her conflicts with other staff, and the procedural irregularities within the department were corrected.
- A City employee was distributing campaign literature within City buildings. The matter was investigated by the appropriate department and the campaign materials were removed.
- A City employee was driving a City vehicle recklessly. The case was referred to and investigated by the department which identified the driver and provided verbal counseling.
- A City employee spent an extensive amount of time at a private business during working hours. The department found that the employee was working at the business on City time. The employee was verbally counseled and warned that future incidents will result in disciplinary actions.
- A City employee frequently came to work late, took extended breaks and falsified overtime records. An investigation by the department found no specific evidence





to substantiate the allegations. However, some procedural irregularities were found, and the employee was verbally counseled.

- A City employee directed obscene gestures towards a citizen. The employee was identified and counseled regarding the incident.
- A City employee was using a City vehicle to socialize on City time, and was gone from the office for extended periods of time. The complaint was investigated by the appropriate department which found some of the allegations to be substantiated. The employee's work schedule was adjusted so it could be more closely monitored and the employee received counseling.
- A City employee was rude to a member of the public. The department was notified and the employee received counseling and a warning.
- A City employee was rude and abusive to a member of the public when asked a question. The matter was referred to the appropriate department and the employee was verbally counseled about his conduct.
- City employees were observed sleeping in their vehicle. The employees were identified and verbally counseled about their conduct.
- An individual failed to register as a lobbyist and to properly report the client. The matter was referred to the Enforcement Division, which compelled the individual to register as a lobbyist and report his organization as his client.
- A City supervisor permitted a subordinate to study on City time. The department investigated the complaint and was unable to substantiate the specific allegation. However, the department counseled both the employee and supervisor regarding the alleged misuse of time, reassigned the subordinate to another supervisor, and prepared a memo for all staff emphasizing the proper use of City time.
- A City employee used a City vehicle on a weekend to distribute religious materials. The employee was identified and verbally counseled for not using better judgement.
- A City employee used City equipment for personal business on the weekend. The employee was identified and verbally counseled about the incident.





- A City vehicle was observed parked at a gym after working hours. The department investigated the allegation and identified the employee. The employee was verbally counseled regarding his actions, and all employees were notified that City vehicles were to be used for City business only.

91/93Success





This is the City of Los Angeles Ethics Commission's Hotline. If you need Police, Fire, or emergency medical services, please call 911.

Hold for a brief message for our Spanish-speaking callers. The message in English will resume.

(Spanish) You have reached the City of Los Angeles Ethics Commission's Hotline. If you need Police, Fire, or emergency medical services, please call 911. This Hotline Program is only intended for reporting misconduct by City of Los Angeles officials or employees. Although you do not have to identify yourself, you are encouraged to provide your telephone number. Please be as specific as possible in describing the details of the incident you are reporting. Please leave your message after the beep.

(Back to English) This Hotline is for reporting misconduct by City officials or employees, including:

- Violations of laws or regulations;
- Waste or theft of City funds or resources; and
- Abuse of authority or conflicts of interest.

Please note that this Hotline Program is only intended for reporting misconduct by City of Los Angeles officials or employees. If you are calling to report problems which occurred in the County of Los Angeles, other cities, or any other jurisdiction, we are unable to assist you and you will not receive a call-back.

Also, if you are calling to request services, information, or assistance regarding any of the following matters, call the City's Information and Referral Operator at (213) 485-2121:

- Trash collection;
- Trash recycling;
- Street sweeping;
- Street repairs;
- Street lighting;
- Graffiti removal;
- Parking enforcement;
- Department of Water and Power Consumer Services;
- Enforcement of Building and Safety codes; and
- Animal regulation.

We are unable to assist you regarding these services and you will not receive a call-back. Again, please call (213) 485-2121.

If you are calling about matters within the Ethics Commission's jurisdiction, please leave today's date and your message after the beep. Although you do not have to identify yourself, you are encouraged to provide your telephone number. Please be as specific as possible in describing the details of the incident you are reporting.

If you are a City employee, retaliation against you for using the Hotline is prohibited by City law.

Thank you.

It was found that, after an emergency medical services, please  
call 911.

With our sincere thanks for our Spanish-speaking callers,  
the message in English will follow.

Thank you for having called the City of Los Angeles Police  
Department's Hotline. If you need Police, Fire, or Emergency  
Medical Services, please call 911. The Hotline is open 24 hours  
a day and is staffed by bilingual personnel. If you are  
in an emergency, please call 911. If you are not in an  
emergency, please call 311. The Hotline is also available  
for non-emergency requests. Please call 311 for all other  
requests. The Hotline is a free service and is available  
in Spanish, English, and Chinese. Please call 311 for  
all other requests.

Thank you for calling the City of Los Angeles Police  
Department's Hotline. This Hotline is for reporting  
non-emergency requests. Please call 311 for all other  
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all other requests.

- \* Animal Control
- \* Fire
- \* Police
- \* Public Works
- \* Traffic
- \* Utility
- \* Water
- \* Waste
- \* Youth

We are unable to assist you regarding these services and you  
will not receive a call-back. Please call 311 for all other  
requests.

If you are calling from outside the City of Los Angeles,  
please call 311 for all other requests. The Hotline is  
a free service and is available in Spanish, English, and  
Chinese. Please call 311 for all other requests.

If you are a City employee, please call 311 for all other  
requests. The Hotline is a free service and is available  
in Spanish, English, and Chinese. Please call 311 for  
all other requests.

Thank you.  
The City of Los Angeles Police Department  
Hotline



City of Los Angeles  
Ethics Commission

# COMPLAINT / WHISTLEBLOWER HOTLINE 1-800-824-4825 PROGRAM

Call the hotline to report any of the following abuses:

- \* Violations of any law or regulation by a City official or employee.
- \* Waste or theft of City funds or resources.
- \* Abuse of authority by any City official or employee.
- \* Use of a City office or position for personal gain.
- \* Conflicts of interest by any City official or employee.

Your call can be made anonymously. You do not have to identify yourself.  
Information you provide will be treated confidentially and investigated promptly.

OR

You may write to the Complaint / Whistleblower Program at :

CITY ETHICS COMMISSION  
201 N. LOS ANGELES STREET  
L.A. MALL - SUITE 2  
LOS ANGELES, CA. 90012-4190

Retaliation actions taken against you by supervisors or others for your use of the Hotline is prohibited by City law. If you believe that you have been subjected to retaliation, contact the Complaint / Whistleblower Program immediately.



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City of Los Angeles  
Ethics Commission

HOTLINE  
1-800-834-4822

PROGRAM

Call the hotline to report any of the following issues:

- Violations of any law or regulation by a City official or employee
- Waste or theft of City funds or resources
- Abuse of authority by any City official or employee
- Use of a City office or position for personal gain
- Conflicts of interest by any City official or employee

You will not be made anonymous. You do not have to identify yourself. Information you provide will be treated confidentially and investigated promptly.

or

Submit your complaint to the City Ethics Commission

CITY ETHICS COMMISSION  
301 N. LOS ANGELES STREET  
LA MAIL - SUITE 2  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4202

Remember, we are here to help you. If you believe that you have been subjected to retaliation, contact the City Ethics Commission immediately.